

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Exchange With Reporters in New York City Prior to Discussions With Balkan Leaders October 24, 1995

Balkan Peace Process

President Clinton. Let me begin by saying that I am delighted to have this opportunity to meet with President Izetbegovic and President Tudjman. We are very much looking forward to having the chance to discuss the prospects of peace.

As all of you know, the United States is committed to peace in Bosnia, but an honorable peace, which preserves a unified state that respects the rights of all of its citizens. And we are very much looking forward to the proximity talks, which will begin in a few days in Ohio. And of course, if a peace agreement can be reached, we expect NATO and the United States to help to implement it. And we'll be discussing that today.

Q. Mr. President, are you troubled by Senator Dole's effort to bar President Milosevic from attending those talks?

President Clinton. I believe the proximity talks will be held, and I think they should be. And I don't think anyone in the United States should do anything to undermine the prospects of bringing this horrible war to a close. And I would remind anyone who thinks otherwise to remember the wisdom of Prime Minister Rabin, who told us in 1993 that you cannot make peace with your friends.

Q. How do you rate those prospects, Mr. President? Do you think this is the last best chance for peace in Bosnia?

President Clinton. It's clearly the best chance in the last 4 years. And I think I would rate the prospects as good, thanks in no small measure to the wide range of efforts made by these two Presidents, to the diplomatic mission that Mr. Holbrooke has headed so ably, and to the resolve of NATO and the United Nations in dealing with the violations of human rights in previous agreements. So I think the moment

is here if we can seize it to make a successful peace agreement.

Q. Do you think Dole's proposal, as you say, would undermine the proximity peace talks?

President Clinton. I think the proximity talks are necessary to make a peace. And I believe they—

Q. [Inaudible]—will undermine that?

President Clinton. I've already answered that. I don't think we should do anything which undermines the prospects of having these talks go forward. And they require people who have been on all sides of the conflict to get together to make peace. That is the responsible position, and it is the one the United States should follow and I believe will follow.

Q. Just what results do you expect out of the talks in Ohio? What is the best possible scenario?

President Clinton. That they will agree to make a peace.

Q. Can there be a solution here in Ohio, do you think, or is this just one more step?

President Clinton. Well, that's up to them. The United States will be there to be supportive. Our Contact Group partners all—Germany, United Kingdom, France, and Russia will be there. We will all be working hard. We'll do our best to get it done.

Thank you.

American Media

Q. Do you think we're a disaster, sir?

President Clinton. That's why I laughed yesterday. I wanted to make sure you got the attribution right. You have to admit it was kind of funny, though. [Laughter]

Q. It was.

Q. It was a moment. [Laughter]

President Clinton. We all need those moments.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

Balkan Peace Process

Q. President Clinton, what mechanisms are you going to use in Dayton, Ohio, to convince the Serbian side that the reintegration of Eastern Slovenia is the only solution?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, the United States is hosting these talks along with our Contact Group partners—the Germans, the British, the French, and the Russians—to give the leaders the opportunity to come here to make their own peace. And we will do whatever we can to be useful in that regard. But my position is that we have to seize this moment. This is by far the best chance we have had because

of the circumstances on the ground and because of the resolve of the international community, because of the diplomatic mission. And we have to seize this moment and resolve these issues. And I believe it can be done diplomatically if all the leaders proceed in good faith. And I have no reason to believe they won't.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:30 p.m. in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel prior to meeting with President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters in New York City Prior to Discussions With President Jiang Zemin of China October 24, 1995

China-U.S. Relations

Q. President Jiang, are you still hoping for a promise from President Clinton that the Taiwan President will not be allowed to visit America again?

President Jiang. We will discuss this issue. We will—[inaudible]—discuss this issue.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

Q. Mr. President, will human rights be an issue in your talks today with President Jiang?

President Clinton. We'll talk about a lot of things, but we're just meeting. We haven't even had a chance to say anything yet, but we'll give you a report later.

Q. Mr. President, with symbolism being so important with these kind of meetings, why would you allow the Chinese to dictate the

meeting place so they could avoid confronting a Tiananmen Square display?

President Clinton. The important thing is that we're going to have this meeting. It's very important. And we'll have it. It'll be a good exchange. And then afterwards we will report about it.

Q. Well, what is the purpose of this meeting, Mr. President? Is it a face-saving gesture on both sides?

President Clinton. No. These are two great countries that have a real interest in maintaining a constructive dialog with each other and, wherever possible, a partnership.

NOTE: The exchange began at 3:05 p.m. at the Lincoln Center. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.